



# Better by Bicycle

Safer, sustainable streets for Port Macquarie

The General Manager,  
Armidale Regional Council,  
Armidale, NSW 2350

council@armidale.nsw.gov.au

31<sup>st</sup> May 2026

## **Submission Regarding the Proposed New England Rail Trail**

**Better By Bicycle Port Macquarie** is a Bicycle User Group (BUG) affiliated with Bicycle New South Wales. We make this submission to represent the views of our membership (over 100 cyclists) and, we hope, cyclists in similar coastal regions of northern NSW. There are two other BUGs in the region (Coffs Harbour and Dorrigo/Urunga/Bellingen) but numerous cycling clubs and groups, all within an easy drive of the proposed New England Rail Trail.

Our submission is short as we focus on our perspective as potential visitors from outside your local electorate. You have already provided a thorough breakdown of the economic, social and health benefits of the proposed rail trail for your local community. This reflects our own research and values regarding cycling infrastructure.

We strongly support your assertion, within the *New England Rail Trail - Armidale to Ben Lomond Section, Business Case, (February 2024)*, that the trail would attract cycle-tourists from within the state, mostly for overnight stays.

Many of our members enjoy touring holidays entirely or partially on bicycle or shared trails. There are few and only short options currently available within the state. Popular destinations for those wanting to experience a historically interesting, traffic-free and low-gradient ride on a rail trail are, by necessity, interstate or international. Victoria boasts the Murray to Mountains, Great Victorian, Great Southern and many more. SE Queensland the Kilkivan-Kingaroy and Brisbane Valley trails. The ACT has excellent local trails for day trips (and will benefit from the proposed Monaro Rail Trail). Adelaide is at the center of a growing network of rail trails. Internationally the



# Better by Bicycle

## Safer, sustainable streets for Port Macquarie

lure is primarily New Zealand's South Island Rail Trails and the Velo network in Europe. We have no such trails within easy reach of Port Macquarie.

The convenience and economic benefits of your proposed option would attract us, in many cases, to spend a few days in New England rather than further afield. We think that the utilisation of existing Rail Trails from within their own state, as quoted in your business case, confirms the untapped market from regional and, no doubt, metro NSW. We already know Armidale to be a beautiful and well-resourced city to visit. We can confirm that our members would be likely to linger in communities along the rail trail to shop, eat, sleep and to charge e-bicycles. Should the entire length of the proposed New England Rail Trail be completed they would be even more likely to spend one or two nights along the route and support any enterprising shuttle-bus service to leave or return to their cars. Our membership would range from those considered high-value tourists; many being retired, preferring hotels or guest houses and eating in restaurants; to those camping and self-catering.

In summary, we strongly support your proposed development of the Armidale to Ben Lomond section of a New England Rail Trail. We confirm your prediction that you would attract intra-state cycle tourists, such as our members, and we very much look forwards to someday riding the trail and visiting your communities along the way.

If we may offer clarification or support, please contact our secretary, Dale Howard, at the below email address.